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Bard

SLEAZE (1)

Distorted grooves on old records
let the sound anyway out—
wobble of piano worst.

Still, it holds the elbow
when one sings lieder

or in my case flirts
with the glamorous pianist
you can barely make out
behind the foolscap scores
a scared page-turner
but all I do is listen to her eyes.

SLEAZE (2)

Alban

Berg brought
us together,
now either
be lyric with me or heal
your dissonant spaces
silent with the urgent
harmonie de moi.

22 XII 07

FRAGRANCE

This incense is "Nirvana"
burns last light in my house here.
Things make me think.

22 XII 07

SHORE

The Jersey shore is bleak today,
half-frozen wavelets curl
cream over one another
to fall and stand almost
still on the sand. Till
the next push. The sea.
They come in cycles.
They knock on someone's door.
All the beach cottages
are empty, any light
you see in a window is
a lighthouse searching,
car passing on a road
back there. You are alone,
this irritating commentary
is not even from me, not even
I am there, you are alone
with the meaning of things.

22 December 2007

= = = = =

At the new writing desk
admiring rain, I too
can be vertical, write
standing up as it falls.

22 XII 07

= = = = =

Rain comes on disguised as mist
invested in the little woods
between house and stream stands
grey. There will be deer
tracks on the slope's crest
can't see them but they're there
the snow reassures us.
Invisible moisture sinking
down in the white
unperplex us healing
pale day fuse pale heart

23 December 2007

= = = = =

I see myself described online as a philosopher.
I assumed it was a mistake or a pleasantry
(feels more like unpleasantry)
but then that got me thinking.
Maybe that's what poetry actually is,
succinct enthymemes (you like that word?)
chewy as gristle and tasting of truth?
Is poetry just a tango of propositions,
a flash of thigh here, a dip, long hair
swoops down and sweeps the floor
and nobody dies, though Achilles
keeps complaining? Who leads the band
to whose convulsive or drowsy tunes
we waltz the dictionary around
till someone smiles or weeps or falls
headlong into my arms and there
that's what I wanted all the while?
And omigod I'm sitting here thinking
about all this, poetry and what is it
and who does it and why and what
good is it for the world and then
I realize I'm thinking, yikes, that's what
philosophers do, isn't it, think and think
and let you know it, in books
even longer than their thinking?
What have they done to me
with their label, my whole ontology
crumbles before the serene
pixels on the screen, revenge
of the episteme, valse funèbre,
I write books I'd be the last to read.

23 December 2007

(so described on Mark Thwaite's *ReadySteadyBook's* Books of the Year for 2007)

= = = = =

Songs listening to other songs.

It would take only a little magnet
to make your iPod
say all its words at once,
a sound like fur
made up of ten thousand strands
of song and listen.
Glisten as your mind goes mad
sorting the sounds. Psyche
was locked in this room before you,
sorting the kinds of things
stored in the mind. Listen
to the silence: this is the
music of what you have
already. All your life.

23 December 2007

= = = = =

The speakable
says us.

Saves us.

There is a door
in what is heard

as a word
no matter
what it thought
it meant or who

made the sound
of it saying

24 December 2007 (from old zettel)

= = = = =

Eucalyptus leaves real amid silk
Boucher pink roses and bluebells
stand tall on the radiator enduring
what flowers are famous for
attention of diptera and humanity
we are suckers both for color
telling us where it is sweet. Heat.
Sweat. Chess pie. Honeybuns.
Ancient customs of a borrowed land
suck the olive from your lips
then leave. Because I too am sailor
I too have a destiny mostly
made up of Don't. At the door
I talk to doors, at dawn I discover
daylight was my long lost friend
forget everything I tell you,
I am the lie that language tells
to make you listen. Pretty girls
in orchards elsewhere. Seals
asleep on sandstone beaches.
Uguale, as the master said,
anything you love is just
one more thing you love, pink
or blue, makes no diferencia,
pay attention, it's all equal
if it's not one thing it's another.
Babybreath too. Tall tin can.

24 December 2007

TRANSSPECIED

When no one is paying too much attention
I slip out of my house
and pretend to be human.

Walk on legs, only two of them,
and waving my arms gently in the air
as if to express subtle philosophical notions
none too simple.

Walking around!

Wearing clothes!
Looking, being seen,
boldly,

The thrill, that at any moment
I could be discovered!

And have to tell them all

what I really am.

24 December 2007

[dream etymologies, 1]

family.

I dream that 'family' is as if from the Latin verb, *fo, fare*, 'to speak.'

Then family means

the people who talk to each other.

Our word 'fate' comes from that verb too -- *fatum*, 'what has been spoken.'

So familiar things are:

the things that speak for us.

And sometimes to us.

[dreamt Christmas morning 2007]

QUILTING FOR BEGINNERS

I caught myself trying to make
sense. A devout Christian woman
is running a quilt store in Carolina
and teaching young wives how to
quilt. Is that what a new wife needs?
Does anybody anyhow go to bed
or if so, under one of those things?

*I am there for your body
which itself is the gorgeous
bright and satin quiltwork
that shelter shows your mind.*

25 December 2007
driving south

(from an old memo:)

When I think about things
stretched out in front of me
I get confused. Where [.. ...]
is their [.....] agency, sir,
and the little island Iceland
which calls itself Island
on [...] stamps
color of sunset, Nietzsche,
miracles in the time of the Apostles
beer garden, can't get that anymore,
what did the War do, [..... ...]?
All the battles I missed I had to {{ unheap }}
some other way, {{obscurity in saloon}},
wouldn't you say, or are they a{{n emerald}}?

transcribed 25 XII 07

= = = = =

If a flower had a father
or a forester lived under the lake
and fairy tales were all that's ever
taught in schools then

we might get somewhere that matters,
my fingers walking up your side
and down again, the sheer
miracle of another person being there

after all this solitary confinement
they call a city, finally
a single other person to be with
on a quiet snow field. On a hill.

25 December 2007

= = = = =

for M.M.

Maybe it is a war,
all the time, Priam,

every father loses his sons

But always believe
in the beleaguered,

the mood around the more
is house. Home.

Ship coming round the headland
White Sea

always another language.

25 December 2007

= = = =

Can it be the same one
I felt fifty years ago
this hand

touching this skin,
can it be me,

where have I been traveling
all these years while
my body was staying?

And you're
still here too,
all of you who listen to me now,

your bodies are snug, sage
in time's faintly baroque music,
lullaby, lovesong, alba on the tower,
sobbing at the gate, cradlesong, goodnight,
safe in the body still.

Can it be me who was this child?
Doesn't this child still exist,
himself still, apart, safe,
looking at me
with a mixture of envy and contempt
at what I have become,
what I have done with all those years,
with all his sensitivity, excitement, yearning,
his curiosity, his beautiful skin?

26 December 2007

MODERN DUTCH LANDSCAPE

Experiment the sound though through
midnight moldy fig poured rigid meters
riddle me this kind ring around that kind
say it all together a trim scallop shell
drifting in the sky you have seen that
in Douwe Elias already the whole night
cracked open by gas station glow against
the dark low clouds and the man came in
talking about Lessing it only happens
in time it could be a drum or a pronoun
it researches the same way the deep
condition of being in the body at all
drowning in the weir of sensation
long after every grief the saintess said
bring it on it will annihilate me
into you and love's bright hardware
never wear out comparison compassion
this music always looks like rain.

27 December 2007

= = = = =

Lest anything be less its mother
or act prophetic to be grace
on her anxiety going down
to meet the glory foot of the stairs
we climb again to the alabaster
bedroom white thigh heat of noon.

2.
Time was. And then time is.
And he couldn't as the saying goes
"get a word out of her" and so
he knew the friendship was a ship
already in the past already
one lost sweet cliché worth
remembering a bitter little while.

3.
Not Fragonard, Boucher.
Not structures of desire
but the desired thing itself,
fetish strong, the whims
of pink velleity padding
behind its target up
long hallways of blue casinos
nervewracking candelabra
flicker everywhere she goes
it means to follow, not form
but silly need in idleness.
To sink into the color alone.

27 December 2007

= = = = =

Long walk to nowhere and back
the west of us
clearly in sight.

Tired of being tired
I turn you into me
and put you to sleep.

Sleep is an ocarina
from Peru, sleep
is a broken-down tenor

halfway through his last high C,
makes it, snow falls
deer walk the timid woods,

sleep is a pack of deer
stomping through snow
deep through maple

saplings, sleep is maple.
measlewood, sleep is spotted,
sleep is the leprosy of consciousness,

in sleep the glib distinctions
fall away, sleep has to be
a highway, sleep is a map on fire,

sleep is a cow lying down
waiting for rain, sleep
is a baby chin smeared with

farina, sleep is a slap
in the face, sleep is breadcrumbs
scattered on the snow,

may I never wake up may I
always be awake and sleep
is cool till the first dream

comes, but then but then.

Do you remember
the first dream you ever were?

27 December 2007